DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES AT OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE, 1603-1642

BY

CARL JOSEPH STRATMAN

A. B., De Paul University, 1940

A. M., University of Illinois, 1943

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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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LEIDEN

DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES AT OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE, 1603-1642

In the preparation of this study an attempt has been made to gather enough material to make possible a study of the Academic drama in England between the years 1603-1642. Only one work has attempted to make a detailed study of the Academic drama—at both Oxford and Cambridge—and that is the scholarly work of Frederick Boas, in his *The University Drama in the Tudor Age;* but his work, as its title implies, ends with the death of Queen Elizabeth. While my work does not attempt to rival the masterly study of Professor Boas, it is, in a way, a continuation of that work. Thus, in this thesis I have attempted to gather together all available information concerning the Academic drama between 1603 and 1642, adding my own interpretation and comments where the facts seemed to warrant doing so, and pointing out any significant details which have not been brought to light previously.

By Academic drama I mean all plays that are known to have been written by Academic men, whether teachers or students, even though some of these plays may never have been acted. In this regard, I would also like to mention that even the "Interludes" and "shows," no matter how brief, if they were written by anyone connected with either Cambridge or Oxford, will also be considered as forming part of the Academic drama.

Though I have been able to discover evidence that over a hundred Academic plays were written between 1603 and 1642, yet since some of these plays are now lost, and others exist only in manuscript form in libraries in England, I have limited my study to an examination of sixty-one Academic plays. Of these sixty-one plays twenty-seven are in English and thirty-four in Latin. By using these figures I think it may safely be stated that plays in the vernacular were be-

coming more popular at the two Universities between 1603 and 1642, than they had been in Elizabeth's reign. Such men as Daniel, Thomas Cartwright, Thomas Randolph, and Thomas Goffe wrote their Academic plays in English and, though no direct evidence has been found to support the statement, I think it may safely be assumed that the influence of these men was of some consequence in the growth of the vernacular Academic play. Abraham Cowley himself wrote *The Guardian* in English. Though some of the men of the time deprecated the use of English, while still others insisted they were writing in Latin because it is the only "civilized" tongue, English was planting its roots at the Universities. Some of the authors, as George Ruggle, in his *Ignoramus,* used Latin because they felt that their satirical attempts to poke fun at what annoyed them would stand a better chance of success.

Generalizations are often dangerous and misleading, and since my study does not include all the plays in the period—many of the Academic plays existing only in manuscript form in libraries in England—caution must be observed in drawing conclusions. Yet I do think it can safely be said that the Royal visits of King James I and Charles I helped to stimulate dramatic activities at the two Universities. The Universities went to great trouble and expense in order to make the productions as lavish as possible, even hiring the outstanding scenic technician of the age, Inigo Jones, to help with the scenery. There is no way yet, or at least I have discovered no way, to measure the amount of influence these visits had upon the future English Academic drama, but I think the very fact that Samuel Daniel, William Cortwright, Peter Hausted, Thomas Randolph, Phineas Fletcher and Abraham Cowley—outstanding men at the Universities—were chosen to write plays which were to be represented at the Royal visits, must have had some influence in encouraging the Academic dramatists towards greater efforts. There was the success of such plays as *The Queen's Arcadia,* Ruggle's *Ignoramus,* which King James had to see several

times because he enjoyed it so greatly, and *The Royal Slave*, which the Queen enjoyed so much that she had it staged for her benefit by professional actors. Further, Royal visits, with the King attending each play, resulted in the Academic drama attaining a form of Royal approbation, and this approval must have offered encouragement to the University dramatists who were under censure from the Puritans and others who objected to the staging of plays within the precincts of the University walls.

During this period, (1603-1642), not only were Italianate comedies written at the Universities, but the period also witnessed the Academic revival of the Medieval moral allegory and the development of the Pastoral Drama. In general, the earliest of these moral allegories were essentially medieval, and of these *The Castle of Perseverance* (Ca. 1550), a typical example, presents the struggle between the forces of good and evil for the soul of man intending thereby to teach a moral lesson. As these moral allegories became more prominent on the professional stage their scope broadened to include various aspects of the political, religious, and economic controversy which came with the Reformation and Renaissance. The Academic moral allegories developed along the same lines, and during the period studied in this thesis they were used to make a study of man. Thus, *Lingua*, like many other plays of the day, adopts the fashion of personifying or allegorising the parts and faculties of man. *Pathomachie* continues the tradition of using abstractions to represent certain phases of learning, of complaint, or of behavior, by representing in abstract form the passions or the affections. Other plays of this type are Thomas Nabbe's *Microcosmus* (1635), *Stoicus Vapulans*, *Fucus Histriomastix*, and Zouche's *The Sophister*. William Strode's, *The Floating Island*, presented before Charles I, on Monday, August 29, 1635, is an allegory of the passions in a state of revolt. The various passions, which are represented as rebelling against the rule of the senses, are intended to shadow forth the opponents of the royal policy. Ostensibly the play is an

attack on Puritanism, being written to please the King and curry the favor of an Anglican audience. It was in this manner that playwrights could adapt the moral allegory to fit their own purposes.

It was an easy transition for the dramatist from the moral allegory to the Pastoral drama, and I have found that at least nine pastoral plays survive from my period. I think it may be significant that these pastoral plays were all produced before 1616, showing that by that time the pastoral element had perhaps begun to subside in Academic plays. At King James I's visit to Oxford, in 1605, two pastorals, *Alba,* and *The Queen's Arcadia,* were staged. The historical importance of *The Queen's Arcadia* lies in the fact that it was the first play to exhibit on the English stage the direct and unequivocal influence of the Italian pastoral drama. It showed the influence of Tasso's *Aminta,* Guarini's *Pastor Fido,* and Luigi Groto's *Pentimento Amoroso.* In this same decade the anonymous *Pastor Fido,* adapted from Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido,* was acted at King's College, Cambridge. *Parthenia* is an Italian pastoral drama type, translated from Luigi Groto's *Pentimento Amoroso,* a wild tale of murder and intrigue, judgment and outrageous self-sacrifice. Phineas Fletcher's *Sicelides,* a piscatory allegory, which was to have been presented before the King on his visit to Cambridge in 1615, but was not acted until March 13, 1614/15, is dependent upon the *Arcadia,* Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered,* and the work of Ariosto. *Melanthe,* acted at Trinity, March 10, 1614/5, is indebted chiefly to Guarini's play *Pastor Fido,* though it also borrows from Tasso's *Aminta* and Bonarelli's *Filii di Sciro.* Samuel Brooke's Adelphe is derived from the Italian comedy of intrigue, *La Sorella,* by della Porta. Finally, there is the Latin comedy *Atalanta* by Philip Parsons, which is founded upon the Boetican legend of Atalanta.

In this thesis I have been able to find sources, or at least partial sources, for twenty-eight plays. These sources, for most of the plays, are of Italian origin, though these

Italian plots themselves very often came from the Romans. However, Italian playwrights did exert great influence upon Academic writers. The following plays are based upon classical models: *Orestes, Philosophaster, Narcissus, Naufragium Joculars, Byrse Basilica, Senilis Amor, Hey for Honesty, Birth of Hercules, Fucus Histriomastix, Ajax Flagellifer.* Ben Johnson's influence may be found in Cowley's *Guardian,* Hausted's *Rival Friends,* and William Cartwright's *The Ordinary.*

As plays became more frequent on the Academic stage, authors began to use these dramas as a sort of personal vehicle to curry favor, to criticise, to teach, to amuse, to satirize and to attack. Many of them were bawdy, and some deliberately indecent. Plays which were used as vehicles of satire, of Puritans, Churchmen, Lawyers, customs and manners, and even for poking fun at the Universities themselves are: *The Floating Island, Technogamia, Ignoramus, Albumazar, Loiola, Fucus Histriomastix, The Rival Friends, The Guardian, Aristippus, The Conceited Pedlar, Philosophaster, The Ordinary, The Lady-Errant, Labyrinthus, Fraus Honesta, Naufragium Joculars,* and *The Queen's Arcadia.*

It was, I think, the tendency to unbridled comedy, the often suggestive scenes (for comic effects), and the same kind of licentious attack upon the Puritans, especially when perpetrated by men studying for the ministry, that led Milton to his attack upon the Academic drama of the time. Further, it was in a way these same lawless features that made the Puritans themselves attack the Drama as an evil thing, so that they kept up a relentless warfare against plays until at last, in 1642, they succeeded in closing the theaters throughout England, including the stages in the Halls of the two Universities.

There is a paramount need for basic bibliogrphical tools in order that an intelligent approach can be made to a study of the Academic drama. In order to provide such a basis I have included four appendices: the first of these is an

alphabetical listing of all the plays. Each edition of the play, if there is more than one, is also listed. The information given for each play is, first of all, the entry from the Stationer's Register, the full title of the play, the collation and catch-words, any notes that may be of value and, last of all, the libraries where the plays can be locted. All in all, over sixty libraries, both in the United States and England, are listed. The second appendix is a chronological listing of all the plays, which I have been able to discover, that were staged at either of the Universities. This list includes such points as the name of the author, the date of composition, the College where the performance was staged, the date of the first edition, and the type of play. The third appendix designates the location of all the manuscripts which I have been able to discover. Finally, the fourth appendix is a working bibliography of the Academic drama. In this bibliography are the books and articles which I feel are of most value to a student in this field, and many of them a "sine qua non" for an intelligent approach to such a study.

VITA

Carl Joseph Stratman was born in Detroit, Michigan, on December 19, 1917. He received his elementary school training in the Parochial schools of Chicago, Illinois. He attended High School at Mt. Carmel, in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. June, 1940, he received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from De Paul University. His theological training was pursued at the Catholic University of America, from 1941-1945. In 1945 he was ordained to the Priesthood. In 1943 he received a Master of Arts Degree from the University of Illinois. January of 1945 he received a Master of Arts Degree, in Speech and Drama, from the Catholic University of America. For the Academic year 1946-7, he was granted a Fellowship in English at the University of Illinois.